



5 July 2021

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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 28 May 2021 to the Ministry of Education requesting the following information:

1. *A list of all schools the Minister of Education knows are using fossil fuels, with a breakdown of fossil fuel type, and region.*
2. *An explanation of the basis of the estimate that "1150 state schools burn fossil fuels to heat classrooms." What information is this estimate based on? Could any sources please be included in this OIA response.*
3. *An outline of any plans that the Ministry of Education or Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority have to update information on fossil fuel use in schools.*

Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

I am providing you with a list of schools, broken down by region, that are recorded as having a boiler that can use a range of fuel sources, including woodchip. See excel spreadsheet attached as **Appendix A** to this response. This responds to part 1 of your request.

Source of Information and Data limitations (part 2 of your request)

The information I am releasing to you has been sourced from the Ministry's asset management database (K2). Please note this was extracted as at 31 May 2021 and may vary from previous information provided by the Ministry.

There are limitations to the quality of data we currently hold. In part, this is due to how and when school project data is processed for updating in the Ministry's asset management database (noting that most school property projects are Ministry-funded but school-managed). School asset details are updated when projects are marked as closed, which occurs after final invoices are paid and any maintenance or defects period has ended. Project closure may take up to a year after the asset has entered use. Therefore, the list of boilers, for example, is likely to contain some out of-date information that is subject to change on an ongoing basis as project information is updated.

While woodchip are not a fossil fuel, we have included data on boilers that utilise woodchip for completeness. Further, boiler asset data does not currently recognise wood pellets as a specific fuel type and does not differentiate between natural gas and LPG.

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Mindful of these limitations, the figure of 1150 state schools with fossil-fuel boilers on their school site has been provided as an approximate number, and should not be relied on as an accurate number of schools actively using fossil-fuel boilers.

Note that the Ministry has five property regions into which this data has been broken down. *Southern* covers the entire South Island and the Chatham Islands; *Central South* covers Taranaki, Manawatū, Whanganui, Wellington and Wairarapa; *Central North* spans Waikato, Hawkes Bay, Tairāwhiti and Bay of Plenty; *Northern* covers Auckland and surrounds; and *Tai Tokerau* is a region on its own.

Work to improve our data (part 3 of your request)

In response to Part 3 of your request, we are carrying out an asset data improvement project to better understand and record the range of assets on our school sites, to assist with better planning and decision-making. As part of this work, the 'Asset Type' that records boiler fuel type will be changed to recognise all current boiler fuels, along with some guidance for staff around what constitutes an electric boiler, and the difference between wood pellet and wood chip, and natural gas and LPG.

The Ministry is exploring means of updating boiler asset data when the new boiler is in use, rather than at project closure. In the short term, a process has begun to manually update our current data on boilers, which may take a number of months to aggregate across almost 2,100 state schools.

As you will be aware, the Government announced in January 2020 that eight schools would have their 11 coal boilers replaced, with another 18 coal boilers announced in July 2020. The rest of the coal boilers to be replaced will be confirmed as the programme progresses. Boilers are generally chosen based on the asset condition ratings and remaining useful life from the Ministry's boiler inspection programme. The projects will be delivered by Ministry consultants with support from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA). Further information on this programme can be found [here on Education.govt.nz](https://www.education.govt.nz/energy-efficiency-and-conservation-authority/). If you would like further information about EECA's, I encourage you to contact them directly.

The Ministry now proactively publishes OIA responses on our website. As such, we may publish this response on our website after five working days. Your name and contact details will be removed.

Thank you again for your email. You have the right to ask an Ombudsman to review this decision. You can do this by writing to info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143.

Nāku noa, nā



Kim Shannon
Head of Education Infrastructure Service